

How to prepare for an occupational safety and health inspection

Why are we inspecting your workplace?

The aim of the occupational safety and health authorities is to ensure that work in Finland is healthy, safe and fair. For this reason, we inspect workplaces using a wide range of supervision methods and provide advice to both employers and employees. The Regional State Administrative Agencies' Occupational Safety and Health Divisions carry out the tasks of occupational safety and health authorities.

Generally, we inspect workplaces and business sectors where the occupational safety and health risks are the greatest. We concentrate on safety risks, workload management, and minimum working conditions, among other things. We also strive to extensively inspect a wide range of workplaces in different sectors. This provides us with a good feel for what happens in working life so that we can share information on good workplace practices.

An inspection is more than just supervision

Our inspections help us to ensure that occupational safety and health issues are handled in accordance with the law. An inspection is not just about supervision, however; it also aims to help the workplace to develop its occupational safety and health activities and working conditions. Our visit is an opportunity for dialogue between the occupational safety inspector, the employer and the employees.

The inspection also deals with any issues that employees at the workplace wish to raise. The inspector cannot solve matters on behalf of the workplace, but they can explain good practices and provide advice on where to find help and tools for challenges.

Prepare for an inspection with documents and self-assessment

Occupational safety and health inspections may focus on aspects such as working conditions, workload, or the rules of working life. The matters to be dealt with are specified in the inspection notification.

Employer checklist

1. Find the documents you need to have ready.
2. Even before the inspection, assess the state of occupational safety and health at the workplace.
3. To support this assessment work, use the information provided on the Tyosuojelu.fi website.
4. Make sure that an employee representative is involved in the inspection.
5. Consider who else it could be beneficial to have present at the inspection (the person responsible for human resources matters, occupational health care).
6. Adhere to the obligations and deadlines issued as a result of the inspection.
7. Continuously monitor and develop occupational safety and health.

Before an inspection, the employer should ensure that documents relating to the matters under inspection are readily available during the inspection. This helps make sure that the time allocated for the inspection is not spent looking for information.

In general, at minimum the following documents should be available during an inspection:

- documents relating to identifying and assessing hazards
- occupational health care service agreement and a report of the occupational health care service provider's workplace survey
- documents on how working hours are monitored.

Before the inspection, it is also a good idea to carry out a self-evaluation of the occupational safety and health activities at the workplace. This allows the workplace to gain greater benefit from the inspection and be better prepared to develop its occupational safety and health activities. [The Halmeri method](#) is one tool for assessing the status of safety management. »

How an occupational safety and health inspection is carried out

Normally, the inspector contacts the employer in advance in order to agree on the date and time of the inspection. If there is a justifiable reason to do so from a supervision perspective, inspections may also be carried out without prior notice.

The object of an inspection is usually a place of work. We also carry out enforcement in the form of remote inspections via a meeting application and document checks on the basis of written material.

The inspector will want to consult representatives of both the employer and the employees during the inspection. The employer may also request that other participants attend the inspection – for example, the presence of occupational health care is recommended.

During the inspection, the inspector will observe working conditions based on discussion, documents, and a tour of the workplace. Working conditions may also be assessed using different indicators or surveys. The results will provide a workplace summary, which will also provide comparative data for the industry average. At the end of an inspection, the inspector explains their assessment of the work environment and what possible legislative shortcomings they have observed. In such cases, the inspector will issue obligations that will be recorded in the inspection report. The rectification of any defects that are serious or cannot be classed as minor shall be controlled ex-post. Please note: we will only have to resort to strict measures such as conditional fines if deficiencies are not rectified despite a request to do so.

The occupational safety and health authorities' telephone service provides advice to employers and employees

The nationwide telephone service of the OSH authorities is available at **+ 358 295 016 620**.

The service provides guidance for both employers and employees on the following issues:

- employment contracts, working hours, annual holidays and other issues related to the terms of employment
- improving working conditions at the workplace and developing the workplace's own occupational safety and health activities
- the safety of workspaces and working methods, machinery and equipment
- psychosocial load, harassment and inappropriate behaviour, and employment discrimination
- contractor's obligations and liability
- the use of foreign labour
- improving working conditions in the construction sector.

> **More information about the telephone service:**
www.tyosuojelu.fi/telephone-service

INFORMATION ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN FINLAND

- > **Guidance for workplace's own work on occupational safety and health matters is available on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's website:** www.tyosuojelu.fi/web/en.